

## Kickball kicks off in Hill City

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With organized softball, baseball, basketball and even dodge ball leagues already established, Lynchburg's Parks & Recreation department has incorporated another pastime into its repertoire.

Lynchburg's first kickball league formed this year and it's already two weeks into its four-week season.

"I think it was a softball team, actually, that gave us the recommendation to do kickball," said Lisa Light, the program's on-site supervisor.

But unlike softball, the kickball league had no hard and fast rules, so Light said she tried to create a comprehensive list from hodgepodge sources, including high school leagues and other adult leagues.

The teams must be coed, with the same number of male participants as female.

There is no base stealing, no bunting, and with two strikes you're out.

Another peculiarity: Fielders can throw the ball directly at advancing base runners, in lieu of applying a tag.

The double-headers are played on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights - seven innings apiece.

This year, six teams signed up, but Light said she hopes there is a greater turnout next year.

Though several of this year's teams are sponsored by a business or organization, that's not a necessity.

"We're just a lot of friends that came together and tried to get a team going," said Jimmy Wesley, whose team, KickBall Hard, is not linked to any organization.

Wesley, who bowls and plays softball and baseball, said kickball drew him in because of its relaxed atmosphere.

"It's a little bit slower than most sports, but it's really laid back," he said.

Michelle Jones, who heads up the team of J. Crew employees, said she was hooked when her softball team was handed some promotional flyers.

"All the guys were like, no, we want to play softball," Jones said, "but all the girls were like, 'hey, this would be cool.'"

Light said that, with six teams and only four weeks worth of games, some teams would not normally have the chance to play each other. She said that could be subject to change, however.



Kick Ball Hard's Shawn McCarthy (left) and Mike Farrington almost collide while going for a pop-up during Wednesday's game.

"If everybody's still into it at the end of the four weeks, we might extend it for a week so that they can play."

Charlie Marts, who plays for J. Crew, likes the relaxed atmosphere of a kickball game.

"I feel fantastic about it," he said. "It's very low-key, whereas softball people can be intense."

"It's been great. Everybody seems to be having a good time," Light said, "and, you know, we're learning."